place the common stones now in use; it seems to us they offer many important advantages over them. First of all, absence of noise, great facility of traction, and economy in the wear and tear of carriages and horses. Also a great improvement for the salubrity of the city, on account of the imperviousness of Asphalte, which prevents water from infiltrating, and facilitates its going off. Finally, there is a consideration which is highly interesting, that is, in a certain length of time it will cut short barricade-making with the stones taken up from the ground."

Miscellanea.

Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society—Plymouth Branch.—A meeting of the above was held at Plymouth, on the 9th inst. Mr. Llewellynn Jewitt read a paper "On Encaustic Paving Tiles," in which, after a few introductory remarks, he said—The decorations and appliances of our early and mediæval ecclesiastical buildings are of the greatest importance and value to the architect, and to the archæologist. The gargoyles of a church will frequently lead our minds to the fables and miracles and superstitions of our mediæval forefathers. The tombs and the brasses show us the costume and personal decorations of the periods in which they were erected; the stained glass of the windows gives us an insight into the state of the arts of the period; the oak seats, with their quaintly carved figures, illustrate the popular literature of the age; and the tiles of the pavement possess no small share of interest, from their exhibiting to us examples of costume, armorial insignia, and inscriptions of the highest importance. Ornamental tiles were formerly much used for paving the floors of sacred edifices. The earliest known specimens appear to be of the latter part of the twelfth, or the beginning of the thirteenth century,—many of these exhibiting the beautiful Early English foliage of the period. Of these, the examples from Castle Acre, preserved in the British Museum, are perhaps the most ancient.

The Alp Tunnel.—Its northern entrance is to be at Modane, the southern at Bardonneche, on the Mardovine. The latter entrance, being the highest point of the line, will be 4,092 feet above the level of the sea, and yet 2,400 feet below the culminating point of the great pass, over Mont Cenis. The connecting lines leading to either entrance of the tunnel will be eight inclined planes of about 5,000 metres, or 2½ English miles each, worked like those at Liege, by endless cables and stationary engines, but moved by water power from the torrents. The tunnel itself will measure 12,290 metres, or nearly 7 English miles in length: its greatest height will be 19 feet, and its width 25. A most remarkable part of the project is the newly devised machinery and motive power by which the Chevalier Maus proposes to bore it. This machinery is said to be as ingenious as it is new, presenting, as a correspondent of the *Times* states, some extraordinary facts in mechanics which could hardly have been anticipated. In comparison with such a gigantic undertaking as this, the Thames Tunnel and the Britannia Bridge become secondary objects. An application for funds to begin with will be made to the Piedmontese Parliament forthwith, and the work, which it is expected will occupy five years, will cost 14,000,000f.; while the entire railway of the Alps, connecting the tunnel with the Chambery Railway on the one side and with that of Susa on the other side (in length together 36,565 metres, or 20¾ English miles), will cost 21,000,000f. more, forming a total expense of 35,000,000f.

Mahogany Blocks.—Last week a piece of mahogany, forming one of three blocks from a single tree, imported from Honduras, was drawn through the streets of Manchester by ten horses. It measured 20 feet in length, 5 feet 3½ inches in depth, and 4 feet in thickness: contents, 5,609 cubic feet: weight, 12 tons and upwards. The tree itself stood 72 feet in height of trunk and clear of branches. It was felled 12 feet from the ground (in case of unsoundness beneath), and the part felled was 9 feet in diameter, and contained 73,000 cubic feet of timber. Messrs. Kearsley, of Manchester, purchased their block at 1s. 10½d. per foot.

Amount of the Liverpool Window Duty, &c.—From a return issued on Saturday week, to an order of the House of Commons obtained by Mr. G. Pechell, dated 28th February, 1850, it appears that the amount of window duty assessed, and the net amount received, with the number of houses charged, for the year ending the 5th day of April, 1849, were as follow: namely, amount assessed, 1,893,988*l.*; net amount received, 1,813,629*l.*; houses charged, 487,411. The return further shows similar amounts for the same period for the twelve provincial towns in England paying the largest amount, namely:—

	Amount Assessed.	Net received.	Houses charged.
	£	£	£
Bath	21,893	21,278	3,722
Birmingham	16,161	14,986	5,432
Brighton	18,025	17,572	3,613
Bristol	14,675	13,280	4,350
Cheltenham	6,998	6,767	1,407
Clifton	9,429	8,896	1,373
Leeds	7,978	7,596	2,479
Liverpool	32,461	28,856	11,342
Manchester	21,925	20,575	7,754
Norwich	6,627	6,165	1,871
Newcastle-on-Tyne	8,320	7,822	2,854
Plymouth	12,207	11,929	4,527

Electric Alarum.—An invention, attributed to Mr. Woodhouse, of Brighton, but apparently suggested by one described some time since in The Builder by Mr. Petrie, has been exhibited at Mr. Whishaw's telegraph office, Adelphi. By aid of clock-work an alarum is set in motion by a magnet so soon as the electric circuit is completed by the opening of a window or a door to even the smallest extent. In cases of fire, also, as well as of theft, the alarum is rung,—in the former case, by the rise of the mercury to a certain point, in thermometers properly placed, completing the electric circuit. Smee's battery, in two small bottles about 4 inches high, and said to retain sufficient power for six months without interference, is the galvanic apparatus used. A dial points out the whereabout and the nature of the danger.

Drainage of the Metropolis.—In reply to questions put by Sir B. Hall, in the Commons, on 12th inst., Lord Ebrington, on the part of the Sewers Commission, said, that the question of the drainage and outfall of the metropolis was not one quite so easy or simple as some gentlemen seemed to imagine. As soon as the principle was determined and the necessary works agreed upon, the public would have due notice. The commissioners would have to levy rates for the execution of the works; but it was impossible to say what amount would be necessary. There was, however, no prospect of the expense falling with a very heavy pressure on the ratepayers at once, because there was a power in the Act of distributing the charge incurred over a series of years. Sir B. Hall then asked the Home Secretary when the report from the Board of Health would be presented, in order that a time might be fixed for the second reading of Bills for affording a better supply of water to the metropolis. Sir G. Grey said that the report, he thought, would be laid on the table in about three weeks.

Archæological Collection for Cambridge.—Mr. Disney has offered to the university a valuable collection of ancient marbles and statuary, to be placed, under his name, in one of its public buildings.

Christ Church, Kensington.—"To be, or not to be."—Through the medium of your journal, stir up, I beseech you, the building committee of this long talked-of new church; for here have I been these three years a pewless Kensingtonian, a pitiful Sabbath wanderer, obliged, Sunday after Sunday, to roam from church to church, aye, and ofttimes from chapel to chapel, to hear the word of God. Now, as long as eighteen months ago I was induced, at the urgent request of the aforesaid, to cash up my subscription, since which time some of my friends have called me Green Peter, as no building evidence has been produced; however, *cela n'importe*, for I can assure this mesmeric body, that as soon as I have an outward and visible sign of bricks and mortar, I am (as I feel sure many others are), ready to give a second donation.

Peter Pewless.

The Window Tax and Lodging-houses.—The window-tax, as at present regulated, falls particularly heavy on model lodging-houses. A house having less than eight windows is exempted from duty; a house having eight windows pays nearly 2s. 1d. for each window; beyond that number not only is each window chargeable, but the rate of tax per window increases with the number: thus a model lodging-house having 100 windows would be charged 29*l.* 8s. 6d., that is, at the rate of no less than 5s. 10d. per window. The immense produce of the window-tax is the objection to its repeal; but in the spirit of the Act itself, lodging-houses on a large scale for the labouring classes, should be exempted from duty: distinct chambers in the inns of court are so, so are those in universities and in public hospitals, as also houses divided into different tenements, being distinct properties. It has been said that apartments opening from external galleries would be considered as separate tenements; but though they be distinct tenements, they would not be distinct properties, consequently they would be liable to the tax: so also participation in the general use of a kitchen, coffee-room, reading or work-room, would subject the whole structure to the tax. Even if the window-tax generally cannot yet be got rid off, might not the Legislature be induced to place lodging-houses for the labouring classes on the same footing with inns of court and universities? Might not some such arrangement be contrived as that no separate lodging, having only seven windows, should be chargeable? As to reading-rooms, kitchens, &c., it might be hoped that to favour sanitary and moral improvement in the working part of the population, those appendages might be exempted as conducive to good order.—M. B.

Preservation of our National Antiquities.—A correspondent, who writes relative to the destruction at St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, and with the object of pointing out that the chief damage was done by a fire in 1830, says,—In excavating for the purpose of lowering the ground, one large and two or three small bosses were found in a tolerable state of preservation, and these were seen by many persons who felt interested in the matter,—but, from the want of some national and public receptacle for them, they were not presented to the people, but were parted with for the purpose (it was understood) of being added to the City Museum of Antiquities; but whether so or not, they are decidedly safer in the hands of the gentleman who valued them enough to buy them than they would have been in the builder's yard. * * * * I have to add, that one bay of the cloister has happily escaped the general destruction, and is walled up. It has not been seen for years, and is, no doubt, nearly as perfect now as, by what I hear, it then was. Were there any public society to take these matters in hand, the owners of the property would, I feel assured, offer no obstacle to its being laid open for examination; but at present the walling-up protects it from damage, and is its best protection.—W. Christie.

Cost of Marylebone Baths.—At the vestry meeting on Saturday, Mr. Broughton moved that the commissioners of baths and washhouses should be empowered to raise 7,000*l.* to complete the buildings. The sum actually required was 8,235*l.*, but it was expected that the establishment would pay the difference. The original estimate was 10,000*l.*, and it was now ascertained that the structure could not be completed for less than 25,000*l.* Part of the excess in expenditure was said to be caused by a failure of the foundations. Some members charged the commissioners with reckless extravagance, and threw reflections on the architect, which were indignantly repelled by his friends.

Stealing Designs.—Inigo Jones has been before the magistrates in Birmingham, where he lives just now (and makes table covers), with an information against Davenport and Hendren, similar manufacturers, for pirating the ornamentation of a cover. It consisted of vine leaves and grapes, and D. and H. said sapiently, these had been used hundreds of years before Inigo flourished. Their witnesses could not show, however, that they had ever seen them arranged as in the registered pattern in question, and the magistrates fined the copyists 10*l.* and costs.

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